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most unnatural, unnecessary, aggressive and disastrous war which ever afflicted mankind.

Can this dreadful event be averted ? It can only be by repudiating the sentiments avowed by Mr. Seward and other senators of the United States. It is incumbent on the friends of peace to show that they are false: that whether right or wrong our claim does not justify a war: that any evil or danger arising from the British settlements in Central America is nothing compared to those which will be incurred by war: that military preparations to meet this conflict are more likely to promote than to avert it: that any attempts to dispossess the British forces of the positions they occupy must be entirely unsuccessful: that a cheerful resignation of our claim in this dispute, in friendship and good feeling, will not only procure us greater advantages than we can get by menacing perseverance, but will be far more honorable in the eye of every rational and patriotic man: and, above all that a war incurred in this case, will be a tremendous national crime, in defiance of the Most High, for which all its promoters will merit an awful retribution, in time and eternity; and against which every true Christian should bear his most solemn and urgent protest.

J. P. B.

[For the Advocate of Peace.]

HOW SHALL AN END BE PUT TO THE PRACTICE OF INTERNATIONAL WAR ?

IN a recent number under this head we came to the conclusion that this much desired boon must be achieved by a change in the public religion of Christendom. And while we say this, we would not be understood a change in the common public exercises of the Sabbath; far from this. We believe the sentiment usually inculcated in what are styled our Evangelical Churches is in accordance with doctrines and teachings of the Prince of Peace. What then must be the ultimate features of this change ?

This question is proposed as the theme of this article. In our previous Number we noticed the various religions of the world, Islam, Greek, Romish and Episcopalian, all alike giving support to war; and, indeed, nearly all sects of the Protestant Church contaminated with the same error. To the question before us then we answer summarily, The Christian Church, and by this we mean particularly the Protestant churches, for from these we expect all efficient reforms: the Christian Church must adopt the sentiment of individual, moral and religious responsibility, for individual acts pertaining to public affairs, or, in other words, our political and all our acts pertaining to state affairs must be regarded as subject to the same law of responsibility to God as our other acts. The common sense maxim, clothed also with Scripture sanction, "He that doeth righteousness is righteous; and he that committeth sins is of the devil," must be extended to all our acts as members of the State. That this is not the case, especially as relates to

war, is plain to every observer. Mark the language of the military man: "I go for my country, right or wrong." And for this boast he receives general applause. But the law of God and the precepts of Christ know no moral difference between going for *one's country*, right or wrong, and going for *one's self*, right or wrong; and we should know none. Yet the axiom is fully sustained by the law of nations, which is commonly styled, and that by our most eminent statesmen, "the supreme law of the land." Says Vattel, in his *Law of Nations and Laws of War*: "War in form, as to its effects, is *to be accounted* just on both sides." "Whatever is permitted to one by virtue of a state of war is also permitted to the other." "Every member (of the State) capable of carrying arms should take them up at the first order of him who has the power of making war." "The troops, officers and soldiers, indeed all by whom the sovereign makes war, are only instruments in his hands; they execute his will; the arms and all the apparatus are only instruments of an inferior order as they execute the will of the sovereign, not their own; they are not responsible." Such are the doctrines conceded and sustained by common consent of nations called Christians,—yes, by the Christian public. And are they rebuked by our religious teachers? Nay, are they not rather abetted, sustained, inculcated by them? Would that we could say no. Would that with one voice they would free themselves from such a charge. But we yet look in vain for such announcement.

A late eminent author in an elaborate address before a Theological audience, in which he had held forth that the State as an abstract existence possessed an inherent life above and distinct from the life of the men and women that compose it,—it being a continuation or delegation of Divine authority with the same sanctions and the same grounds of appeal to conscience, closes with this language:—"We speak in a spirit of truth and soberness, and, we trust, clearness, of a power which God has positively defined in his Holy Word as a delegation of his own government, having the sanction of positive moral obligation and to be obeyed, not from expediency, not because it conduces to the public security, not through an enlightened self-interest, but *for conscience sake*. Yes, in the prevalence of such sentiment we shall find what we so much need, a *national conscience*, and those who would take away this Divine sanction to law, would also set men free from all allegiance attempted to be derived from the fancied state of nature, for who would respect the lower principle after having learned to despise the higher?" These sentiments, though perhaps more generally than distinctly received, by substituting a national for an individual conscience, and clothing it with Divine sanction suppress a sense of individual responsibility, and thus serve as the strong shield of the war system against the moral and religious truths so abundantly inculcated among us as the prime elements of Christianity. It is thus support and continuance is given to the law of nations and the laws of war—a code founded on and finding its sanction in antiquated precedents—a code which, together with such precedents, should long since have been consigned to its place among the rubbish of the dark

ages. And yet, strange as it may appear, such sentiment, which may well trace its ancestor to pagan priesthood in alliance with civil despotism, holds a prominent place in Christendom at this very day, reducing its citizens to implements of war, and placing their consciences and their lives at the disposal of blood-thirsty tyrants,—yes, and slaughtering them by countless hecatombs, to what ? To “the pretended internal divine dignity of the State.” And shall we as Christians concede to all this ? Christ our captain appointed his followers, kings and priests unto God, having one king over them seated on the holy hill of Zion, and one “great High Priest entered into the heavens where he ever liveth to make intercession for us.” And we as Christians should assert our high calling and our privilege. So did Peter and the other apostles when they said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

So did the primitive church. Though living under a despotic government, and with no Bible other than we have, for three centuries it is said they refused to become soldiers. It was sufficient to their purpose to say, “I am a Christian and therefore cannot fight.” And they would sooner suffer martyrdom than be driven from this position.

And is it not evident from the very nature of the case that war will not and cannot be abolished until this Christian sentiment is restored ? Mahommed, under the claim of prophetic revelation, may adopt the dogma of war as a supplement to Christianity. The pope and the patriarch of the Greek Church, under the pretence of holding the keys of the kingdom of heaven, may arrive at a similar result. But let not the Protestant Church follow out the sacreligious game. We trust in God the day is approaching when “the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountain, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it ; and many people shall go and say, come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people ; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks ; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” By the instrumentality of the same Bible we have before us, shall all this be accomplished. Well, then, may we exclaim with the prophet, “O, house of Jacob come ye and let us walk in the light of the Lord.”

Castleton, Vt., Dec. 6th, 1855.